

December 16, 2025

The Gallipolis City Commission met in a special session on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Bossard Memorial Library, having complied with Section 9 of the City Charter.

City Commission President Mr. Michael Fulks called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence was taken to remember those less fortunate and also for the family of Ray Bush, retired Gallipolis Fire Chief, who passed away.

Upon roll call, the following members were present:

Michael C. Fulks, President
William "Bill" Thomas, Vice-President
Michael W. Brown, Member
William "Bill" Jenkins, Member
W. Matthew Johnson, Member

Others attending were:

John Westfall, City Manager
Shelly Clonch, City Auditor
Andrew Noe, City Solicitor
Chad Vaughn, River Cities News

Ronnie Lynch	Erin Buckley	Aaron Buckley	Autumn Thomas
Debbie Saunders	Brittany Beman	Junior Preston	Dennis Kirby
Donald Pullins	Thom Mollohan	Aaron Young	Lester Plymale
Molly Plymale	Audette Gooch	Silas Boster	Eugene Huffman
Justin Rice	Craig Wright	Stacy Wright	Amanda Hught
Loretta Pullins	Shayna Chapman	Darla Dray	Kathleen Mittendorf
Russell Mitterdorf	Jozie Roberts	Rick Roberts	Shelley Brown
Brenda Pollard	George Wasch	Bryan Martin	Mitz Martin
Matt Evans	Anita Evans	Karen Marr	Larry Marr
Ollie Paxton Tipple	Mariah Scarberry	William Burleson	Michael Kemp
Marlin Griffin	Richard McDaniel	Betty Jo Carter	Helen Craft
Mike Carter	Kevin Dennis	Beau Miller	Ben Polley
David Brown	Charles Brown	Martha Brown	Evelyn Beaver
Scott Fraser	JoAnn Davis	Cathy Sisson	Aaron Salisbury
Carrie Salisbury	Matthew Whitted	Lorna Nomina	Lois Carter
James Sisson	Chuck Easter	Twyllia Swain	Travis Dennie
Jennifer Foster	Geneie Plantz	Katie Ratliff	Sharon Harmon
Jay Caldwell	Barbara Caldwell	Patricia Wasch	Philip Walker
Thomas Duncan	Janet Duncan	Bernice Wells	Rick Wells
Marsha Smith	Jeff Smith	Rachel Meeks	Wendy Canaday
Vance Dray	Robert Brumfield	Priscilla Holdren	Bob Hood
Lisa Browning	David Browning	Jonathan Elliott	Brenda McDaniel
Rick McDaniel	Rette Roettker	Chris Roettker	Lori Saxon
Greg Hall	Fredrick Williams	Tricia Patton	Mark Patton
Mark Spires	Lisa Spires	Peggy McCoy	Jay Jarvis
Taylor McManigell	Randy Carnes	Nina Robinson	Sherry Fraser
Johm Jones Sr.	Judy Jones	Mindena Gillenwater	Penny Ratliff
Matt Easter	Ronald Plantz	David Knotts	Marvin Ours
Troy Johnson	Alvis Pollard	Mike Haynes	Jodie Haynes
Meghan Martin			

The commission received the minutes from December 2nd before this meeting. Dr. Thomas made a motion to approve the December 2nd minutes, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Upon voice vote to approve the minutes, all votes were yes.

Mr. Fulks opened the public hearing of the proposed DORA and laid down some ground rules. Ms. Katie Ratliff would come forward and explain to the audience what the DORA is and what it entails. Following her presentation, questions may be directed to Ms. Raliff or Ms. Rachel Meeks of the Downtown Revitalization Project, or City Solicitor Andrew Noe. After questions and depending on the time allowance, the Commission would hear from 2-3 people who are in favor of the DORA and 2-3 people who are against the DORA. These individuals would have a two-minute time limit and must be a resident of Gallia County.

Ms. Ratliff explained that D.O.R.A. is a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area specifically designed for economic development while maintaining public safety. It allows an adult aged 21 or over to purchase an alcoholic drink in a designated cup and enjoy it in a designated area. The proposed designated area would run from Vine Street to Pine Street and from the Riverfront to Third Avenue, from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day. As of 2024, Ohio has 167 active DORA's. Ms. Ratliff gave some statistics on economic growth in other D.O.R.A.-approved areas in the state. She also stated that the Police Department has been informed throughout the process and is confident that it is manageable and safe. The Downtown Revitalization Project will cover the initial setup of DORA cups and signage for businesses wishing to participate, as well as signage for those who do not wish to participate.

Mr. Fulks opened up the floor for questions.

*Lisa Spires asked why alcohol has to be used as an economic growth, especially at the park where she takes her grandkids, and her husband is a former alcoholic. Ms. Rachel Meeks answered that this is a tool and not anything they are trying to push on anyone.

*Mr. Greg Hall stated that when Kali's came in, they had to obtain permission from the church for alcohol sales due to the proximity. Why does the Downtown Revitalization not have to get permission from the local churches, and why do the people not get to vote on this? The Solicitor answered that it is not required by the Ohio Revised Code for DORA's to get permission or go to the voters.

*Mr. Kevin Dennis said that the proposed Gallipolis DORA is a large area and asked if that is comparable with other communities around the state. Ms. Ratliff answered that it is actually a conservative-sized area with what is allowed. Mr. Dennis said that most areas he looked at were a block or two, and this proposed area takes up a chunk of the City which is abnormal given the population of our town. Mr. Noe said the area can be amended before it is voted on.

*Mr. George Wasch asked how the boundaries were set, being that the proposed area is around 75% residential. Ms. Ratliff responded that Pine Street to Vine Street is the revitalization zone, where the Downtown Revitalization invests and receives grants for new businesses. It allows freedom and economic growth.

*Ms. Meghan Martin questioned whether it had been taken into consideration that there is a daycare within the DORA boundary limit. She would be concerned about a child being hit by a drunk driver. Ms. Ratliff stated that if a cop sees you with a DORA cup and you get into a vehicle to drive, then that would be plain and simple that you would be driving under the influence; it is hidden drinks that have to be patrolled. Ms. Meeks said that bartenders are trained that if they see that an individual is intoxicated, they are to stop selling drinks to that person.

*Mr. Ben Polley said that he has been doing a lot of research in the past couple of weeks and looking at DORAS in other communities and he only found one with a lower population than Gallipolis. He asked where the DORA statistics are coming from that have been mentioned. He has called many other communities and hasn't been able to find anything. Ms. Ratliff answered that the Ohio State University did a lot of the studies.

Mr. Fulks opened the floor to a couple of individuals to speak who are for the DORA and a couple of people who are against.

*Bo Miller, who is a resident of Gallia County, spoke and said that in one way or another, alcohol and addiction have affected his family. Today, he is standing up for moral rights, whether you are a Christian or not, and alcohol leads to nothing good. He is not being a prohibitionist or a vigilante he is just stating what is right. He said that if you want to drink, you can drink on your own personal property or in a bar. Alcohol is not going to bring business into this town, and nothing good is going to come out of this. God changed his life, and he is going to stand by what the bible says is right.

*Ms. Barbara Caldwell stated that she does not understand why the State Legislators decided that the establishment of a DORA should not go on the ballot for the voters to decide. Mr. Fulks replied that she would need to call our legislators and voice her concerns to them.

*Ms. Erin Buckley spoke and said she is pro-DORA. She said she was born and raised here all her life and used to have a business downtown. New things have tried to come into this town and get stomped out if it doesn't meet everyone's standards. The older generation talks about how good the town used to be, but the new generation is coming in, and times change, and people's tastes change.

*Ms. Shayna Chapman, who lives in the proposed DORA boundary, used to be part of the Downtown Revitalization Project. She has seen businesses try to thrive here and sees how hard they work. Her first reaction was that she didn't want people drinking all day, all over town. Ms. Chapman then did her research, invested in it, and realized that it is very locked down. There are many news articles out there on DORA, and it does help with no increase in crime. When the revitalization district was established, it was to see the whole area flourish, be revitalized, and grow small businesses.

*Mr. Bryan Martin, a lifelong resident, shared a story of his 29-year-old son, who was a Marine and had a serious operation. After his surgery, he was told by a physician to drink two beers a day to help the area of the surgery he had. After drinking from an open tap, someone had dropped a tablet in his drink that contained fentanyl and sadly, they had to bury their son. Alcohol is an open gateway for abuse. His plea this evening is for the Commission to vote no because no parent should have to bury their child.

*Mr. Aaron Buckley, who said he grew up without a father due to drunk driving, had a mother who taught him personal responsibility. That is the same that the bible teaches, it is your job to have a relationship with your God. The DORA is not forcing anyone to ruin their lives, but it is an opportunity to make this town go from stagnant to growing. The public elected the Commission to make decisions, and they should let them do their job; that is how government works.

Mr. Fulks closed the public hearing on the DORA. The legislation is on the agenda tonight to vote on, but it will be pulled and tabled due to time requirements from when the hearing was published in the newspaper. It will be voted on at the first meeting in January.

The Commission took a five-minute recess.

The City Auditor presented four invoices over \$3,000 for approval of payment:

- \$5,050.23 from Ohio BWC for monthly premium. Inv: 11/28/25. PO: 12/8/25.
- \$9,528.00 from Lori Young for Gallipolis in Lights shirts. Inv: 11/21/25. PO: 12/5/25.
- \$10,087.51 from Bob's Market for Gallipolis in Lights expenses. Inv: 12/2/25. PO: 12/9/25
- \$16,500.00 from Bob's Market for Gallipolis in Lights expenses. Inv: 12/2/25. PO: 12/9/25.

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the payments, seconded by Mr. Jenkins. Upon voice vote on the motion, all votes were yes.

The Commission received the November 2025 financial statement in their packets and Ms. Clonch asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the November 2025 financial statement, seconded by Dr. Thomas. Upon voice vote on the motion, all votes were yes.

There was presented and read to the Commission as a second reading, Resolution No. R2025-13 entitled **A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE APPRECIATION OF THE GALLIPOLIS CITY COMMISSION TO R. WILLIAM "BILL" JENKINS FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICES RENDERED AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GALLIPOLIS, OHIO, AND EXTENDING THE BEST WISHES OF THE COMMUNITY TO HIM.** Dr. Thomas made a motion to adopt the resolution on the second reading, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Upon roll call to adopt the resolution on the second reading, all votes were yes.

There was presented and read to the Commission as a second reading, Resolution No. R2025-14 entitled **A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE APPRECIATION OF THE GALLIPOLIS CITY COMMISSION TO W. MATTHEW JOHNSON FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICES RENDERED AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GALLIPOLIS, OHIO, AND EXTENDING THE BEST WISHES OF THE COMMUNITY TO HIM.** Dr. Thomas made a motion to adopt the resolution on the second reading, seconded by Mr. Brown. Upon roll call to adopt the resolution on the second reading, Dr. Thomas, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Fulks voted yes, and Mr. Johnson abstained.

There was presented and read to the Commission as a second reading, Ordinance No. O2025-36 entitled **AN ORDINANCE TO REVISE THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES BY ADOPTING CURRENT REPLACEMENT PAGES.** Mr. Johnson made a motion to adopt the ordinance on the second reading, seconded by Mr. Brown. Upon roll call to adopt the ordinance on the second reading, all votes were yes.

There was presented and read to the Commission as a second reading, Ordinance No. O2025-37 entitled **AN ORDINANCE CREATING A DESIGNATED OUTDOOR REFRESHMENT AREA (DORA) AND ESTABLISHING SAFETY AND SANITATION PLANS.** Mr. Jenkins stated that he won't be here to vote on the ordinance, but he does not agree with the area extending all the way to Pine Street, and that it should end at Cedar Street. Also, they need to think about the hours that were proposed and put a limit on the ordinance for one year to see how it works out. Mr. Jenkins made a motion to table the ordinance until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson explained the reasoning for the area that was proposed. The area was formed as a Downtown Revitalization District, which allowed restaurants located in that area to acquire a liquor license to try to entice new restaurants to come in. He understands that alcohol has done bad things to people; you can't deny that. He had a great meeting with local pastors and read all of the emails from concerned citizens that were sent to him. It's encouraging to see so many people involved, and the common thing is to work together to try and find alternatives. Upon voice vote to table the ordinance until the next Commission meeting, all votes were yes.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.


Clerk, City Commission


President, City Commission